

# SAE

## Supervised Agricultural Experience

### Ideas for Promoting SAEs to Students

- **Award Videos/Chapter Videos** – Use videos of the proficiency awards sessions from state and/or national FFA conventions to create excitement about SAEs while providing ideas (focus on proficiencies applicable to your area). Or, create a video template that makes it easy for members to produce a chapter-based SAE promotion video featuring local projects and members.
- **Classroom Activities** – Use hands-on classroom experiences to promote SAEs. *Example:* Students collect samples of grasses grown in the local area. They research and identify grasses with their scientific name, common name, growth habits and recommended growing conditions.
- **Community Involvement** – Build relationships with community members that may be interested in hiring agriculture students. When the time is right, you can assist students in finding a job for an SAE project or program. FFA alumni are a great way to get this started. Service organizations are also a good resource.
- **Dream/Planning Sheet** – Create a planning sheet where students list their “dream” SAE along with resources needed, time and financial considerations, goals, etc. When completed, help the student decide if this is a realistic pursuit. If not, support the student in developing a different “dream” plan.
- **Field Trips/Workshops** – Use student projects and local facilities as sites for field trips to promote SAEs. These field trips can also include workshops. Examples of field trips include taking the class to view a set of show animals for judging and evaluation; traveling to a student’s forestry plot to take measurements; or visiting a commercial strawberry farm to harvest and taste. For a combined field trip and workshop, students can tour facilities at a research center, vet office, packing house, etc. This is followed by a workshop given by employees/volunteers to discuss how to plan out an SAE at that facility or a similar facility.
- **Financial Facts** – Share the financial benefits of SAEs by providing examples of the earning possibilities for various projects, as well as the scholarships/cash awards available on the local, state and national levels. Invite older students into the classroom to share examples of how they used money from their SAE to save for college, make a large purchase, reinvest in their business, etc.
- **Include SAE in Curriculum** – Utilize class time and curriculum time to instruct on SAE concepts. For example, use every other Friday for a mini economics lesson and to update records in class. Or add courses to your curriculum with this focus.
- **Local Guest Speakers** – Promote SAE opportunities by inviting local businesspeople with agriculture-related careers into the classroom as guest speakers. This is also a good way to expose community leaders to the agriculture department.
- **Orientation Activities** – If your school hosts an orientation for incoming students, include SAE as part of your ag program orientation. Utilize available media to promote SAE to parents and students and highlight student achievements.

- **Personal Success Stories** – Have state winners in your chapter or those with highly rated gold proficiency applications talk to younger students. They can bring displays, record books, share their story and answer questions. Another option is for you to share stories about the successes of former students/FFA members – how they got started in their SAE and where they are today because of their involvement.
- **Proficiency-SAE Connection** – Make the connection between proficiency awards and SAEs by listing proficiency award areas that are correlated with specific SAE opportunities. Post this list in a highly visible area of your classroom.
- **Recognition** – Inform students about proficiency awards and encourage them to apply starting at the chapter level. Assist with applications and records books. In some cases, your state may offer cash awards for the best record book. Or a professional group/organization may offer awards in a specific category of SAE. For example, the Game Commission in Pennsylvania presents a certificate and cash award to students with winning conservation SAE programs.
- **SAE Program Visits** – Take younger members (middle school and freshmen) to visit successful SAE programs of older members in the chapter. Younger members can see first-hand the best practices and efficiencies required for a successful SAE in an area in which they are involved or have an interest.
- **“SAE Spotlight”** – Have an “SAE Spotlight” on a bulletin board or wall in your classroom. On a monthly basis, select an SAE from each class for being most improved, most unique, winning an award, etc. Students can write a one page summary and post it with photos. This promotes SAE to fellow students and others who enter your classroom while providing a means of recognition.
- **SAE Survey** – Conduct an SAE survey in class to take note of student jobs or hobbies. This will help you and the students identify proficiency areas according to their interests. Examples: A student who enjoys hunting and fishing is a good fit for a wildlife and environmental SAE. A student who enjoys fixing cars and working with equipment is a good fit for an agricultural mechanics SAE.
- **Student Interviews** – Conduct a five-minute interview with every student at the beginning of the year to review interests, goals, etc. Have them schedule the interview and show up with a completed personal inventory and map with directions to their home (for project visits). Schedule an SAE visit at the completion of the interview and award extra points (counted toward their grade) for completion of this exercise.
- **Summer SAE Plan** – To promote SAE over the summer, have students submit a typed “Summer SAE Plan” as part of their final grade at the end of the year. This plan should include personal contact information, SAE location and contact information, ideas for SAE improvement/growth over the summer, skills the student wishes to attain, etc. Send students a reminder letter (to arrive in May or June) to contact you about scheduling a summer visit.